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United States
Department of
Agriculture
Food and
Nutrition Service

The Friday Letter

Vol. 8 No. 24

December 23, 1988



Happy Holidays

and Best Wishes

for the New Year!

Mountain Plains Staff Creates Archiving System



Steve Anderson of the MPRO food stamp staff recently received a certificate of merit and a cash award for developing an automated archiving system to expedite storage and retrieval of FNS records, including quality control (QC) files.

Anderson recognized the need for an improved system when a Utah sanction resulted in a search through old records and correspondence. Much of that material was stored in boxes at the Federal Center Archives in Denver. At the time, each unit in the program office was responsible for a group of states and had its own system for maintaining files. To obtain data for a sanction period, program staff had to backtrack through file copies of correspondence.

"There has to be a better way," Anderson declared--and he proceeded to develop one. He talked to Charlie Closs, MPRO's resident computer wizard, and began entering data into SuperCalc III. He soon discovered that the data could not be manipulated and the file was too cumbersome. At that point, MPRO's Dean Duncan arrived on the scene and introduced Anderson to dBase capabilities.

Having converted his SuperCalc files to dBase files, Anderson modified the

process to suit the program's ultimate needs, while simultaneously correcting errors in the records.

At present, some 375 cubic feet of QC case records and state agency correspondence are stored in the computer. Staff can pull records by state, fiscal year, QC review number or case number, and review month. State agency files are sorted by state, fiscal year, and title. All policy correspondence with states can be quickly located. Actual records can be retrieved from the Federal Center Archives within 24 hours, since the system tells them exactly where to look.

At one time, voluminous records pertaining to pending legislation, sanctions, or Freedom of Information requests often occupied 30 to 40 boxes and had to be pulled for a hand search to secure a needed record. Now staff can go to a specific box for that record.

With the new system in place, front-end time and work are shortened. Staff enter field office QC review records into the system, and files are annually retired to the archives knowing they can retrieve what they need quickly and easily.

The framework for the new system and the initial input of some 350 boxes of records was completed in July 1988, just before MPRO moved to its new offices. The system contains records as far back as 1979 and is now almost complete through 1981.

Anderson's contribution in program improvement has made life easier for several of his grateful colleagues.

-Story by Joanne Widner
Photo by Craig Forman
MPRO Public Affairs Staff



Chicago Child Care Center Opens

The new Chicago Federal Employee Child-Care Center recently held its grand opening. Day-care advocates in Illinois hailed the opening of the center as a step in the right direction and praised the Reagan Administration for demonstrating to private employers how to provide reasonably priced day care.

The downtown Chicago center is licensed for 40 children, ages 2 through 5, with expansion plans for 80 children. The children's parents pay a maximum of \$68 a week per child. Federal employees and parents have commented that the center has a great physical layout (including an outdoor playground), and outstanding staff members who encourage learning through play.

The center is operated by SUPERTOTS, an affiliate of Ogden Allied Services Corporation. Selecting the provider and renovating the space was a joint effort by the Region 5 General Services Administration, the child-care center board of directors, and the Chicago Federal Executive Board. Celeste Zywiciel, MWRO statistician, served as president of the board of directors, and Monroe Woods, MWRO administrator, served as chairman of the Chicago Federal Executive Board during the planning of the child-care center.

-Story by Celeste Zywiciel
MWRO Statistician

Puerto Rico Will Soon Administer the Child Care Food Program

Puerto Rico Department of Education staff is aiming to begin administering the Child Care Food Program (CCFP) in the Commonwealth by spring.

For several months, MARO's bilingual staff has been helping State agency representatives gear up for the program, which provides nutritious meals and snacks.



Maritza Cardona, Puerto Rico Department of Education; Margarita Maisterrana, MARO child-care unit; John Vega and Sonia Terron, Caribbean Area Office, review the many sources of outreach materials used by a New Jersey family day-care operation.

During a visit to New Jersey, staff from the administering agency and the Puerto Rico Department of Social Services--the agency which will sponsor the family day-care component of the program--met with program administrators of all levels to familiarize themselves with the way the program is run. They also toured a family day-care home facility to see how it is operated.



Puerto Rico staff (from left) Elisa Cruz and Lucila Benvenuti, CCFP coordinators, and Gumersinda Trujillo, home monitor for Middlesex County, New Jersey, visit a family day-care home in New Jersey to observe operations.

(Puerto Rico Continued Next Page)

Kansas Introduces Commodity Supplemental Food Program

Kansas recently became the fifth Mountain Plains state to operate the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). The Kansas plan was approved in fiscal year 1987, and Federal funds for new CSF programs were authorized in fiscal year 1988. Kansas became one of six new state agencies nationwide approved to operate the program.

Although the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) orders, stores, and issues the commodities, the "lead" agency for CSFP is the Department of Health and Environment (DHE). DHE will allocate funding to SRS and handle certification and participation notices.

In Kansas, CSFP will coexist with the WIC program in three counties--Sedgwick, Wyandotte, and Shawnee--with an authorized caseload of 2,943 women, infants, and children for the new program. This will allow CSFP participation in the Kansas City, Topeka, and Wichita areas--based on income eligibility and the same nutritional risk criteria required by WIC in Kansas.

Roni Beshears of Kansas DHE is the CSFP director for the state.

-Story by Joanne Widner
MPRO Public Affairs Staff

Midwest Recognizes "Make Your Food Dollars Count" Committee

MWRO's Deputy Administrator Tom Pate recently presented certificates of appreciation to the "Make Your Food Dollars Count" workshop committee members who organized a very successful conference in Gary, Indiana, in April.

The conference attracted 123 people, mostly social service workers from more than 20 agencies in Indiana's Lake, Porter, and Newton Counties.



Pictured (left to right) are: Mary Ellen Rivero, United Way of Gary WIC nutritionist; Joan Hrebec, Ross Township trustee representative; Carolyn Higgins, Lake County public health nutritionist; Dr. Robert Dean, MWRO nutritionist and coordinator for the workshop; Sandra Brown, Dairy Nutrition Council nutritionist; Annamarie Herndon, of the Visiting Nurses Association of Northwest Indiana nutritionist; Pat Dunham, Purdue University Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program nutritionist; and Tom Pate.

-Story by Mary Jane Getlinger
Photo by Lawrence Rudmann
MWRO Public Affairs Staff

(Puerto Rico Continued)

At the New Jersey Department of Education, the commonwealth group saw a demonstration of an automated payment system.

At the county level, a representative from a family day-care program provided the visitors with information on starting the program.

A child-care provider, who coincidentally had worked in the school lunch program in Puerto Rico, also talked to the Puerto Rico officials about recordkeeping problems and menu requirements for different ethnic groups.

-Story by Marian Wig
MARO Public Affairs Staff
Photos by Juliana Vicario
MARO Child Care Food Program Unit

Mountain Plains States Improve Food Service Skills

Ten MPRO states compress most of their school lunch in-service training into summer months. Workshops provide an opportunity for food service workers and managers to upgrade skills and increase professionalism. Annual conferences provide motivation and offer up-to-date information prior to the start of school.

This year most states conducted sessions covering the revised recipe cards, AccuClaim accountability, a commodity update, and potential expansion of breakfast programs. Some also included vendor exhibits and demonstrations. Most meetings featured awards ceremonies and speakers from the American School Food Service Association (ASFSA).

MPRO staff, along with colleagues from neighboring states, conducted workshops on recipe cards, nutrition components, commodity use, accountability procedures, and other topics. Most MPRO state meetings drew 200 to 400 food service staff, a tribute to these employees who often travel on their own time and at their own expense.

The good working relationship and spirit of cooperation between MPRO staff and the 10 states contribute to the continuing overall success of lunch programs.

-Story by Joanne Widner
MPRO Public Affairs Staff

New Recipes and School Lunch Week Drew News Media Calls

The USDA press release announcing the National School Lunch Week and the revised school lunch recipes brought a flood of media calls to the Public Information News Branch at FNS headquarters.

The sets of 161 new, improved recipes were distributed to state agencies last summer. Following the press release, some schools also called since they had not received their copy of the recipes. Organizations not participating in the National School Lunch Program are being referred to the Government Printing Office which sells the recipes for \$25 per set.

"Food service has changed dramatically since the U.S. Department of Agriculture last issued its school recipes, and it was time to update them accordingly," said Assistant Secretary John W. Bode. "Total subsidies to schools, including entitlement and bonus commodities, have risen 25 percent since 1982. Participation in the lunch program, across all income categories, remains 60 percent," Bode said.

The recipes were developed and standardized over a 2-year period by a private contractor in a quantity food production facility. They were then sent to cooperating schools for field testing.

Among other improvements, the revised recipes include the serving size and new crediting standards; eliminate many preparation steps and pieces of cooking equipment; list labor-saving ingredients; give time and temperature for both conventional and convection ovens; provide a nutrient analysis per serving for each recipe; and suggest new salad bar concepts featuring popular ethnic foods.

-Story by Gene Vincent
Public Information Staff



Job Opportunities

FNS is seeking to fill the vacant positions listed below. To be considered for one of them, submit an up-to-date SF-171, Application for Federal Employment, and current performance appraisal to the appropriate personnel office. If you are interested in a headquarters position, apply to the Operations Branch, Personnel Division, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Alexandria, Virginia

22302. Apply directly to headquarters office for all GM-14 and 15 positions. For regional positions, apply directly to the regional office. For details on the requirements for any of the positions listed below, consult the official vacancy announcement. These are posted on designated bulletin boards or copies can be obtained from the appropriate regional or headquarters personnel office.

Friday Letter Vacancy Listing By Vacancy Number

JOB TITLE	AREA OF CONSID.	SERIES	GRADE	CLOSING DATE	VACANCY NUMBER	OFFICE LOCATION
o Financial Manager	(G)	GM-504	14	01/31/89	89-35	NEO
o Mgmt. Analyst	(G)	GS-343	7	01/03/89	89-36	IRMD
o Mgmt. Analyst	(G)	GS-343	7	01/03/89	89-36A	IRMD
o Personnel Mgmt Spec	(G)	GS-201	7/9/11/12	01/03/89	89-37	PED
o Secretary Typing	(G)	GS-318	5/6	01/03/89	89-38	IRMD
o Computer Systems Analyst	(A)	GS-334	12/13	01/11/89	89-41	IRMD
o Staffing Assistant	(U)	GS-203	7	01/09/89	89-42	PED
o Secretary Typing	(A)	GS-318	5	01/09/89	89-43	CND
o Computer Assistant	(FNS)	GS-335	6	12/29/88	89-44	IRMD
o Supv Mgmt Analyst	(G)	GS-334	11	01/19/89	89-45	ASD
o Contract Specialist	(G)	GS-1102	11/12	01/19/89	89-46	ASD
o Supervisory Food Program Specialist	(FNS-N)	GM-120	13	01/20/89	89-47	SNP
o Secretary Typing	(FNS-H)	GS-318	6/7	01/10/89	89-48	BRD
o Secretary Typing	(FNS-H)	GS-318	3/4/5	01/10/89	89-49	BRD
o Secretary Typing	(FNS-H)	GS-318	5	01/10/89	89-50	PDD
o Secretary Typing	(FNS-H)	GS-318	5/6	01/10/89	89-51	BRD

Office Location

PED - Personnel Division
 ASD - Administrative Services Div
 CND - Child Nutrition Division
 SNP - Special Nutrition Programs
 IRMD - Information Resources Mgmt Div
 BRD - Benefit Redemption Division
 PDD - Program Design Branch

Area of Consideration

(FNS-H) - Food & Nutrition Service Headquarters
 (FNS-N) - Food & Nutrition Service Nationwide
 (U) - USDA
 (G) - Governmentwide
 (A) - All sources

Mary E. Kennedy, Editor

The Friday Letter is published every two weeks by the Public Information Staff of the Food and Nutrition Service. To update mailing address or to alter number of copies received, please mail changes to the FNS Public Information Staff, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 823, Alexandria, VA 22302, telephone 756-3000.